

Commissioners,

First, thank you for the opportunity to serve on this committee. Being able to sit down with all involved parties was a valuable experience both as a Montana sportsman and as a representative of the Montana Bowhunters Association. I believe the only way to bring Sportsmen and Landowners together to solve the access, and the wildlife management issues this State faces is through this type of collaborative process. Enacting legislation or structuring seasons that limit opportunities for either party only acts to drive the wedge deeper between us.

I personally cannot support all of the suggestions within this recommendation. To me this recommendation represents a point along an unfinished process. If this committee or a similar one had been charged with the same task before these changes had been made, without the short time constraint or without having to work within the parameters of a permit system I am certain we could have come to an agreement more palatable to all parties.

I do hope you consider keeping this or another similar committee in place to evaluate the ongoing changes in these 23 districts, and I would also like to see mandatory reporting implemented as suggested in this recommendation.

My biggest concern is that Montana will eventually turn out like many of the other western States where the question isn't where you plan on hunting elk this season but rather if you will get to hunt elk this season. In a state where we have an exploding elk population, well above mandated levels, that just doesn't seem acceptable. Permits are the first step down that road. There was a great deal of information presented to us during the course of these meeting but none of it convinced me that these permits would gain archery hunters enough to warrant the sacrifices of opportunity we would have to make.

I would like to ask you the Commission to consider eliminating the permits for archery elk in the 23 areas outside the breaks. Put in place another similar committee to evaluate this until the 2010 season setting process and allow them to evaluate the findings of the PL/PW survey and any mandatory reporting results that we could receive between now and then, if that system were implemented. At that point the committee could make recommendations on whether to permit some or all of these areas.

Sincerely,

Jason Tounsley